

Report to the
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services, Senate
Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services, and the Fiscal
Research Division

Report on
Western Regional Maintenance Operations

Session Law 2009 - 451
Senate Bill 202

Section 10.21A

October, 2009

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of State Operated Healthcare Facilities

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The Appropriations Bill, Session Law 2009-451, Section 10.21A, calls for the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services to “*develop and implement a plan for western regional maintenance operations that increases efficiency, improves facility support, and is more responsive to WRM customers.*” Furthermore, the plan must provide for the following:

- (1) *WRM programs shall be decentralized.*
- (2) *Staff shall be assigned directly to each facility and shall report to designated facility managers.*
- (3) *Supervisors shall be responsible for filling work orders and supervising team members. Eliminate supervisor positions that are not needed to effectively carry out all supervisory duties.*
- (4) *Make available to each supported organization general maintenance workers to allow the completion of simple tasks without requiring work orders through a central location.*
- (5) *The maintenance programs shall share equipment and expertise to the extent possible to achieve savings.*

The legislation also requires the Department to “*decentralize the maintenance activities at the Butner facilities.*”

The Department of Health and Human Services, the Division of State Operated Healthcare Facilities, and the directors of Broughton Hospital, J. Iverson Riddle Developmental Center and the Western School for the Deaf, have engaged in collaborative efforts since early September 2009 to develop and implement a plan for decentralizing the operations of Western Regional Maintenance (WRM). Meetings between the three facility directors and WRM leadership have resulted in the establishment of plans for re-allocating positions back to facilities, the redistribution of budgets and equipment to each facility, and a communication plan that includes a town hall meeting with WRM staff.

The initial phase of the WRM decentralization focused on assignment of WRM employees to one of the three facilities. Those employees that were hired prior to the creation of WRM have been assigned back to their original facility. If they wish to work at a different facility, they may submit a request in writing to the Maintenance Supervisor in the facility in which they are currently working. Those requests will be accommodated whenever possible, ensuring that the trade needs of the facility are addressed. Employees hired after the creation of WRM have been assigned based on the skill sets needed at the respective facilities. The process for these employees to transfer to another facility is by applying for vacant positions. The maintenance staffs of each facility are assigned to respective trade supervisors within the facility, who in turn, report to the facility’s Maintenance Supervisor. Each facility’s Maintenance Supervisor reports to a designated facility manager, typically either the Facility Director or the Business Manager.

Since the employees in WRM are not unionized, there are no formally elected representatives; however, trade supervisors were selected to represent the interests of each trade. Facility Maintenance Supervisors for each of the three facilities have worked with the trade supervisors to construct organizational charts for the Maintenance Departments, including the various trade shops, based on the needs of each facility. The representative trades include plant maintenance, painting, grounds, vehicle maintenance, electrical, heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC), plumbing and steam plant. This process has ensured that the needed expertise is positioned at each of the facilities. In addition, during the employee allocation process, attention was given to assigning essential supervisory positions to each facility to ensure efficient maintenance operations.

During the decentralization process, town hall-style meetings have been held at each facility with employees of their newly created Maintenance Departments. During these meetings, employees were welcomed back as full members of the staff and available information about the WRM decentralization plan was provided to them.

The Division's Budget Office has provided information regarding funding that was originally pulled from the three facilities to create WRM. Funding will be reallocated to each facility based on the percentage of their original contribution. The three Facility Directors are collaborating to determine if any modifications need to be made to this formula prior to the completion of budget revisions.

Facility Maintenance Supervisors are working with trade representatives to determine the appropriate distribution of equipment among the facilities, taking into account the original purchaser of the equipment, the varying needs of the facilities and the need to share some equipment. In instances where only one of a particular type of equipment exists, the three facility Maintenance Supervisors are establishing where the equipment will be located and how it will be accessed by the other two facilities.

As decentralization progresses, on-going attention will be given to the sharing of equipment and expertise in order to achieve savings. For example, facility Maintenance Supervisors and the trade representatives will work together to develop plans for an emergency on-call system, based on the specific needs of the facility. Maintenance staff at all three facilities will collaborate to ensure safe conditions on each campus during inclement weather or other emergencies.

The current work order system, Maintenance Program 2 (MP2), has been effective for managing and tracking WRM maintenance requests. MP2 has the capability to assign work order numbers and track resources and supplies needed to complete the order, and the total cost incurred for the project. It also provides monthly reports for tracking of maintenance expenditures. Each of the facilities will continue to use the MP2 system, with work orders routed to the facility that placed the request. A process is also being developed for simple maintenance functions such as replacing light bulbs to be identified and completed without the need to submit a work order.

The planning and implementation of the decentralization of Western Regional Maintenance has been a cooperative effort among the Facility Directors, facility Maintenance Supervisors, trade representatives and other maintenance staff. It is anticipated that the entire process will be completed prior to the end of the calendar year. The Facility Directors believe that these efforts will result in a more efficient and responsive system that support the on-going physical plant needs of these three facilities.

The legislation also requires that the Department will “*decentralize the maintenance activities at the Butner facilities.*” On August 12, 2009, management of Central Regional Maintenance transferred to Central Regional Hospital which now has responsibility for personnel, funding and equipment and provides maintenance activities at both CRH and RJ Blackley ADTAC. During the decentralization process, attention has focused on ensuring that the maintenance needs of the two facilities will be met in efficient and effective manner.